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Security Council

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Letter dated 31 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

As you are aware, I had the honour to convene and chair an Arria-formula meeting entitled "Enhancing and widening interaction and dialogue between the Security Council and other United Nations Member States, as part of the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document", which was held on 13 December 2007.

The meeting was designed to facilitate an exchange of views related to the efforts to enhance the efficiency, openness and transparency of the work of the Council, as well as its dialogue and interaction with non-Council members.

The invited speakers were:

- Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (2002-2007) and former Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations (1996-2001)
- Ambassador Colin Keating, Executive Director of Security Council Report and former Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations (1993-1996)
- Ambassador Peter Maurer, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations

I believe the meeting was very interesting and useful. Please find attached a summary and recommendations of the meeting, which were prepared under my responsibility.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated among the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Peter **Burian**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 31 December 2007 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Enhancing and widening interaction and dialogue between the Security Council and other United Nations Member States, as part of the implementation of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document

Arria-formula meeting convened by the delegation of Slovakia

13 December 2007

Summary and recommendations

1. The Arria-formula meeting was convened by Ambassador Peter Burian, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations. Three panellists were invited to the meeting to present their opinions on the subject of the discussion: Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, former Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and former Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations (1996-2001); Ambassador Colin Keating, Executive Director of Security Council Report and former Permanent Representative of New Zealand to the United Nations (1993-1996); and Ambassador Peter Maurer, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations. The meeting was attended by the members of the Security Council, the five newly elected non-permanent members of the Council for 2008-2009, as well as representatives of seven other Member States invited to take part in the meeting: Finland, Japan, Jordan, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Singapore and Switzerland. As observers, representatives of the Secretariat and Security Council Report, which is an independent not-for-profit organization affiliated with Columbia University, also took part in the meeting. The meeting was designed to facilitate an exchange of views related to the efforts to enhance the efficiency, openness and transparency of the work of the Council, as well as dialogue and interaction with non-Council members.

2. Participants welcomed the initiative to organize the meeting as an innovative opportunity to discuss this important topic. While welcoming the progress that the Council achieved to date regarding its working modalities and transparency procedures, the participants drew attention to a number of issues related to Council operating processes that could further enhance the openness and transparency of the Council, in particular in the context of interaction and dialogue between the Security Council and other Member States. It was also noted that these efforts remain a work in progress.

3. The following suggestions and recommendations for increasing the involvement of States not members of the Council were generated during the meeting:

Security Council internal issues

- Better and more frequent use of Arria-formula meetings would be useful.
- Systematic implementation of the measures contained in the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2006/507) should be undertaken.
- The Council could assess the implementation of its decisions by establishing "lessons learned" groups.
- Establishing a position of spokesperson for the Security Council was suggested.

Role of the Council President

- The rotating presidency of the Council has a major responsibility towards promoting openness and transparency.
- As a general rule, briefings should be given by the President.
- Communiqués issued by the President could be more substantive and informative.

Interaction with non-Council members and the General Assembly

- Transparency and communication between the Council and the broader United Nations membership was highlighted as a key element. Enhancing and widening interaction and dialogue between the Council and other Member States is a matter not only of openness and transparency, but also of effectiveness.
- Greater involvement of non-members in the thematic issues debated by the Council, especially when there are decisions adopted following such debates.
- Consistent with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council could submit special subject-oriented reports to the General Assembly on matters of importance to all Member States (e.g. sanctions and peacekeeping).
- There could be greater use of information technology in enhancing the interaction between the Council and non-members.
- The annual report of the Council to the General Assembly should be made more substantial and analytical. The Council could hold an interactive discussion with the General Assembly on the annual report.
- Monthly reports of the Council to the General Assembly could be instituted on the basis, for instance, of a monthly assessment of each outgoing presidency.
- Better access of the wider membership to the Council field missions and their conclusions was suggested.

Countries directly affected by Council action and troop-contributing countries

- Regular consultations between members and non-members could be established as a standard procedure of the Council. Countries should be given the opportunity to participate in issues that are of their national interest. The Council should enhance cooperation with actors involved or directly affected

through an informal approach on issues concerning the mandate of Council missions. The Security Council should begin on a case-by-case basis and develop this practice over time. Informal and private meetings and use of subsidiary bodies to effectuate such a new formula would be preferable.

- The Council could include appropriate language in resolutions extending or ending the mandate of current Council missions, promoting wider dialogue with countries directly concerned.

- Forming Core Groups, Groups of Friends or Contact Groups could be promoted to enhance involvement of directly affected countries into the Council's decision-making processes.

- The Council should revitalize and enhance its consultations with troop-contributing countries. Special Representatives of the Secretary-General should be encouraged to participate in the meetings with troop-contributing countries and make substantive presentations. Troop-contributing country meetings should be organized at an early stage (not only on the day of Security Council consultations or public meetings). They should focus on policy choices by the Council, in addition to factual briefings.

Regional and other groups

- Institutional regional groups could enhance their interest and involvement in the work of the Council.

- Holding of informal meetings of the Security Council Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions with interested Member States on a number of relevant issues was encouraged.

Secretariat

- Institutional involvement of the Secretariat, and particularly the Secretary-General, bringing long-term strategy into the process may contribute to enhancing interaction and dialogue between the Council and other bodies, especially the General Assembly.

- A stronger role for the Secretariat in implementing the measures contained in document S/2006/507 was suggested.

- Briefings by the Secretary-General and Special Representatives of the Secretary-General should in general be open.

Economic and Social Council

- An enhanced dialogue between the Council and the Economic and Social Council would be beneficial for both bodies.

Interaction more broadly within the United Nations system

- There could be frequent, more substantive "exchanges of views" between the Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as a standard operating procedure.

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General Assembly
Security Council

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General Assembly
Tenth emergency special session
Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 4 January 2008 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

It is my deep regret to inform you that the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory have begun their new year under increasing assault by Israel, the occupying Power, which has intensified its illegitimate military campaign against the Palestinian civilian population, killing and wounding more people, including women and children. Such military aggressions and violations of international law by the occupying Power threaten to further destabilize the extremely fragile situation on the ground and to completely undermine the momentum and good will created during the recent period by the Annapolis and Paris conferences and resumed bilateral negotiations.

The Israeli occupying forces have been carrying out a series of lethal raids and attacks against towns and cities in the Gaza Strip in recent days. On Wednesday, 2 January 2008, the occupying forces launched air missile attacks against the Al-Shujaiya neighbourhood of Gaza City, killing at least six Palestinians and wounding dozens, while military bulldozers barrelled through the neighbourhood, causing destruction to property and later razing vast tracts of agricultural land.

This attack was followed on Thursday, 3 January 2008, by Israeli tank and warplane bombings across the Gaza Strip that resulted in the killing of at least nine Palestinians, bringing terror, grief and devastation to more Palestinian families. Among the civilians killed were five members of one family in Khan Younis, including a mother, Karima Fayyad, her daughter, Asmaa' Hamdan Fayyad, her two sons, Sami and Ahmad Hamdan Fayyad, and her nephew Mohammad Khodair Fayyad. Several children were seriously wounded as well in the assaults carried out yesterday in the Gaza Strip, with nearly 30 more Palestinians injured as a result of the heavy tank shelling, missile strikes and machine gunfire by the Israeli occupying forces, which also deliberately blew up homes and levelled agricultural fields in the area. In addition to the death and destruction caused, many of those civilians wounded remain in critical condition in Gaza hospitals that continue to be

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overwhelmed due to the shortage of supplies and medicines resulting from the ongoing Israeli siege of the Gaza Strip and the continuing humanitarian crisis.

Today, the Israeli occupying forces continued to carry out attacks in the Gaza Strip, killing two Palestinian men in the town of Beit Hanoun. Earlier in the week, on Sunday, 30 December 2007, Beit Hanoun was also the scene of death and tragedy as the Israeli occupying forces opened fire at a crossing point where pilgrims were returning to the Gaza Strip. The attack resulted in the killing of one Palestinian woman, Khaldiyya Ahmad Hamdan, who had just returned from the hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca, and wounded at least five other people.

Israel, the occupying Power, has also been carrying out major military operations in the West Bank, particularly in and around the cities of Nablus, Tulkarem and Bethlehem, totally undermining the efforts being undertaken by Palestinian Authority security forces, which had been increasingly effective in recent weeks. On Wednesday, 2 January 2008, hundreds of Israeli soldiers in armoured vehicles raided the city of Nablus and the Balata refugee camp there and imposed a curfew on the civilian population. Forced house-to-house searches were carried out by the occupying forces, resulting in the injury of at least 33 Palestinians and the arrest and detention of several others.

At the same time, Israel has not undertaken measures to ease the severe restrictions on the movement of Palestinian persons and goods throughout the West Bank and particularly into and out of East Jerusalem and the surrounding areas. Moreover, in grave breach of international humanitarian law, in violation of United Nations resolutions and in total disrespect for its road map commitments, Israel continues to carry out settlement activities and also continues to construct the wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Such illegitimate, expansionist measures by the occupying Power continue to create facts on the ground that will prejudice final status negotiations and continue to poison the atmosphere between the two sides, seriously harming the prospects for peace.

In this connection, I must also draw your attention to the violence and intimidation that continue to be perpetrated by illegal Israeli settlers against Palestinian civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Two of many examples include the killing of a Palestinian man, Wasfi Al-Khateeb, who was run over by an Israeli settler in a car in the village of Na'leen, west of Ramallah in the West Bank, on 29 December 2007 and later died, on 30 December. Also, on Wednesday, 2 January 2008, a group of Israeli settlers set fire to the historic Al-Hamadiyya Mosque, in the village of Al-Khader, near Bethlehem, using beehives stolen from a nearby Palestinian farm to set the blaze. In this regard, it should be noted that the settlers from the illegal settlements surrounding Al-Khader have been making repeated attempts to seize land from the village and have continuously been harassing and terrorizing the civilian population there.

All of these continuing Israeli aggressions against the Palestinian civilian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, must be of concern to the international community, for their continuation and escalation can only fuel the cycle of violence and bring more instability, tragedy and loss, worsening the situation on the ground and dimming the prospects for peace. Serious efforts must be exerted by the international community, including the United Nations Security Council, to bring an end to such violations of international law by Israel, the occupying Power, and to compel Israel to abide by its legal obligations

and commitments and to carry out much-needed confidence-building measures. At the same time, efforts must continue to be exerted to further promote the positive momentum generated by recent important international conferences in order to halt the deterioration of the situation and support the advancement of resumed bilateral negotiations between the parties on critical final status issues.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 304 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 28 December 2007 (A/ES-10/408-S/2007/766), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

In follow-up to the above-mentioned letters, it is my deep regret to inform you that at least 23 more Palestinian civilians, including children, have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, raising the total number of martyrs killed since September 2000 to 4,862 (the names of the martyrs that have been identified are listed in the annex to the present letter).

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

Annex to the identical letters dated 4 January 2008 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Names of martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem* (From Friday, 28 December 2007, to Friday, 4 January 2008)

Friday, 28 December 2007

1. Bassel Al-Natsha

Saturday, 29 December 2007

2. Ibrahim Ali Al-Louh

Sunday, 30 December 2007

3. Adel Youssef Qishta
4. Khaldiyya Ahmad Hamdan
5. Wasfi Al-Khateeb

Tuesday, 1 January 2008

6. Yehya Sa'eed Jaber

Wednesday, 2 January 2008

7. Aa'hed Mahmoud Shamali
8. Youssef Mohammad Shamali
9. Mus'ab Waleed Jindiyya (18)
10. Abdel Kareem Ahmad Al-Helou
11. Hamada Ahmad Abu Omeira
12. Salem Fouad Al-Wadiyya

Thursday, 3 January 2008

13. Karima Fayyad
14. Sami Hamdan Fayyad
15. Ahmad Hamdan Fayyad
16. Asmaa' Hamdan Fayyad
17. Mohammad Khodair Fayyad (17)
18. Munir Ibrahim Barham
19. Borhom Abu Lihya
20. Mohammad Abdallah Qishta
21. Yasser Rafiq Hellis

Friday, 4 January 2008

22. Ahmad Nasr Al-Kafarna
23. Mohammad Awad Al-Kafarna

* The total number of Palestinian martyrs killed by the Israeli occupying forces since 28 September 2000 is 4,862.